

Abstract 744

TITLE: Disease Reporting In Native America: Where Do We Go From Here?

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ISSUE: There have been at least eight published articles on misclassification of race/ethnicity in AIDS case reporting for American Indians/Alaskan Natives since 1992. A national survey of tribal health departments and Indian Health Service service units in the fall of 1998 found that the majority of tribal health systems were not reporting diseases to anyone and that the majority of IHS service units were collecting such information. This may indicate that the data we rely upon for planning and resource allocation is more problematic than we thought. Tribal compacting for health services has complicated surveillance.

SETTING: Tribal health systems, Indian Health Service, state and local health departments, urban Indian clinics, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.

PROJECT: The improvement of the national disease surveillance system for American Indians/Alaskan Natives is the top priority of the National Native American AIDS Prevention Center's public policy program.

RESULTS: A conversation has begun to take place between Native AIDS activists, IHS, state and federal agencies about the issue.

LESSONS LEARNED: There is no single answer to improving the disease surveillance system for Native Americans. It will require the involvement of all parties concerned to begin to identify specific barriers and potential solutions.

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